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ABSTRACT

Three informational sheets provide parents and employers with advice on ways of assisting school reform through becoming better citizens, getting more involved in the schools, and initiating supportive efforts. The three informational sheets are entitled: (1) "How Can You Be Involved as a Citizen?"; (2) "The ABCs of Parent Involvement"; and (3) "How Can Employers Be Involved?" Dozens of ideans are presented covering all three areas. Advice on parental involvement covers such areas as visiting school sites, volunteering to assist in classroom activities, supporting school programs and services, participating in the school's parent organizations, and supplementing and assisting in the child's educational process at home. Parental assistance through better citizenship includes being more involved in community support efforts for educational reform, sharing information designed to encourage school improvement, and informing legislators of the need to provide support for school reform. Employers can help maintain reform efforts by becoming more involved in educating their employees and the community on the need for school improvement, as well as by applying their knowledge, skills, and resources to assist school districts and schools in the task of restructuring. (GLR)

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INTEGRATING TEACHING STYLES WITH STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES (SERIES OF 14

ED 406 461

The Partnership for Kentucky School Reform

Informational Sheets:

How Can You Be Involved as a Citizen?

The ABCs of Parent Involvement

How Can Employers Be Involved?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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THE Partnership
FOR KENTUCKY SCHOOL REFORM

How Can You Be Involved As A Citizen?

You can become involved in schools by:

- Volunteering in the classroom - seeing what needs to be done and sharing your skills. Examples: reading to students, preparing instructional materials, calling parents, tutoring individuals or small groups, etc.
- Developing volunteer projects that involve retired citizens and non-parents.
- Volunteering to serve on school committees formed as a result of school-based decision making.
- Encouraging schools to hold parent-teacher conferences and other meetings at business or work-sites and/or at hours when working parents can attend.
- Sharing your expertise on school district committees. Examples: management, financial, organizational, group organizing, facilitating, problem solving, consensus building, training, etc.
- Running for the school board or encouraging others to do so by offering to help with their campaigns.

Realizing that broad community support is crucial to children performing well in school, become involved in community support efforts by:

- Volunteering at the Family Resource/Youth Services Centers in your community.
- Volunteering in the KERA program for four-year-olds.
- Helping to identify and provide additional support for at-risk children.
- Providing tutorial support.
- Sponsoring teachers and other school professionals to attend training events and other professional conferences.

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Become a citizen expert on education reform and encourage school improvement in your community by sharing information:

- Volunteer to write articles for local newspapers, business journals, professional organization newsletters, church bulletins.

- Speak to groups about education reform and local education progress.
- Talk to your friends and neighbors and encourage them to get involved, even if they don't have children in the schools.
- Start or join a local education community committee, such as those created by the Prichard Committee, to take a public position about community issues related to education and the general well-being of children.
- Sponsor public forums that report on progress and discuss local progress related to education reform.

Inform local legislators of school activities and of your support for education reform; remind them of the need for their continued support of education reform and its policies.

As a Kentucky citizen consider...

- Only one household in four in Kentucky has children in schools. We must engage the 75% of citizens who pay taxes for school improvement and who will benefit from the stronger economic base that comes from an educated work force.
- Kentucky has a declining youth population and has the least educated adult work force in the nation. Additionally, our young families under age 35 have not done as well economically as older age groups.
- Kentucky has historically had one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation with a low rate of per capita family income.
- We must be aware of how this data affects Kentucky's economic future. The image and reality of a weak education system has limited Kentucky's economic growth.

EDUCATION MUST BECOME A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY.
WE MUST ALL WORK TO SUPPORT EDUCATION!

Thanks to the Partnership Leadership: KENT C."OZ" NELSON, Chairman and CEO of United Parcel Service, Inc., DAVID A. JONES, Chairman and CEO of Humana Inc., and JOHN HALL, Chairman and CEO of Ashland Oil, Inc., and to the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence.

If you need additional information or if you want a speaker to come to your community, call or write:

The Partnership for Kentucky School Reform
P.O. Box 1658 / Lexington, KY 40592 / 1-800-928-2111

Kentucky Education Reform... Producing World-Class Students

THE Partnership
FOR KENTUCKY SCHOOL REFORM

The ABCs of Parent Involvement

"You can't bring about major reform unless parents are going to be a part of it. You have got to have parents understand that they do make a difference, and you've got to get the teachers and the principals to understand the importance of parental involvement."

--Christopher Cross
Former Assistant Secretary of Education

You can affect your child's achievement, the classroom, school or even an entire school district by getting involved in the following activities:

- Make sure your children receive needed health care and preventive services. The Family Resouce Center at your school can assist you if you are having trouble getting these services. Call your local school district offices.

- Be your children's first teacher. Spend time playing with them and reading to them or having them read to you. A half-hour of reading together daily can make a difference!

- Provide ways your children can explore the world around them. Ask them questions about what they are seeing, touching, thinking. Encourage them to talk and write about their thoughts.

- Check with your children's teachers to find out what your child should be doing at his/her age. This will help you know what behavior and learning levels are typical.

- Regularly stress the importance of school to your children. Insist on regular school attendance.

- Make sure that you support their learning outside of school. Work with your children's teachers to know what to emphasize.

- Support your children with their homework by establishing a regular homework schedule for them and establishing a place where they can work without interruption. Spend at least thirty minutes reviewing the results of their work with them. Call the teacher immediately with any concerns about academic progress.

- Establish a restricted TV-watching schedule. Work with your children to allow them a role in making some decisions about what programs to watch. Encourage selection of at least one news show. It is suggested that most children should not watch beyond 1 hour of television daily.

- Stop by your children's school regularly. Informal visits to eat lunch and spend a few minutes in classrooms are important supplements to times when you are there for programs or conferences.

- Volunteer in classrooms. This indicates that you do care about education and learning. Volunteering also provides a needed human resouce for schools. Possible classroom activities might include: preparing instructional materials such as those needed for primary school, reading to children, tutoring individuals or small groups, etc.

- Assist in local decision-making by serving on school councils, school committees, local or state committees.

- Become involved in your school's parent organization.

- Participate in parent education workshops.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions of your children's teachers. No concern is too "trivial."

- Encourage non-parents to join you in supporting school programs and services. We need the help of the 75% who do not have children in our schools. Take them with you to programs. Encourage them to volunteer. Educating our children is a community effort.

- Talk with other parents about concerns you have. Support each other.

- Parents have the most important role in the education of children. You are a child's first teacher and can be his/her most important advocate. Without support, either by a parent, another adult, or some form of an extended family, children will have a difficult time growing up healthy and productive.

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How Can Employers Be Involved?

Based on the premise that every child in Kentucky must be provided with an opportunity to learn and at higher levels than we used to expect, *AND* based on the premise that we want to foster high achievement of our children in order for them to be able to compete on an international level:

> *Each Kentucky employer can develop a unique educational plan which supports employee involvement in education, whether parent or non-parent, and which focuses on policies and practices that result in improving school performance.*

The following activities are possible considerations for employers as they develop education initiatives plans:

Employers can support greater understanding of the need for and content of education reform.

As was evidenced in a recent state survey, the general populace has scant knowledge of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). People need to better understand the intention of the reform programs as well as ways the legislation will be affecting their children. We need to keep in mind that only one Kentucky household in four has children in school.

Businesses and other employers can help address this issue by recognizing that work places offer prime settings to dispense and discuss KERA information. Likewise, employers can effectively communicate with the public in the community where they are located. For example, they might:

- Display informational material on bulletin boards.
- Use local advertising avenues such as newspapers, bank and utility statements, in-house publications and electronic media to inform employees about KERA and to suggest roles they can play to assist its implementation.
- Use the Partnership Speakers Bureau to address their employees at the work-site or at public events they might sponsor.
- Distribute written information about local education issues and KERA at the work-site or in places of business.
- Create videos and other materials that document the progress local school districts are making implementing education reforms.
- Sponsor and support community education forums for citizens and parents.

Businesses and other employers can use their knowledge, skills and resources to assist school districts and schools in the difficult task of restructuring.

Successful implementation of KERA will require districts and schools to undertake a number of activities that call for different ways of doing things. New thinking and new approaches will be needed to implement changes ranging from curricula to budgeting.

Businesses can assist this change process by offering schools their broad range of personal and technical expertise. For example, depending upon the need, businesses might:

- Assist districts and schools in their development of new curricula.
- Offer training in areas of financial management, budgeting, purchasing, team-building and other interpersonal communication skills, data processing, planning, etc.
- Help develop new management information systems to collect important student and school-based data.
- Work with school boards, central offices and school-based decision making teams to craft and implement more responsible and decentralized organizational structures.
- Help schools write proposals that can garner new resources from foundations or other funding sources.
- Lend space at their work-site as lab settings for particular courses schools may want to teach.
- Train teachers in the use of computer technology that can be used to craft new instructional approaches.
- Offer expertise in creating financial management approaches that are more responsible to educational innovation.
- Help school teachers and other school personnel attend training events and professional conferences.

Businesses and other employers can help their employees participate in KERA related activities.

KERA can work only if it succeeds in helping parents become active partners in their children's education. Such support can be difficult to cultivate—not because parents are disinterested or uncaring—but because the demands and pace of today's society make such participation difficult.

Businesses and other employers can clearly help address this dilemma by developing policies and programs that actively encourage employee involvement in the education of children in their community. For example, they might:

- Sponsor brown-bag lunch discussions and lectures that focus on parenting and learning issues, and offer internal education programs on parenting.
- Advocate government policies, programs and practices that support or require parental involvement.
- Include in corporate advertising their support for policies and practices that encourage parental involvement.
- Support school programs that prepare teachers to work with parents.
- Implement programs that allow employees to participate in school conferences and meetings concerning their children. At the same time encourage other employees to be actively engaged in their community's schools.
- Encourage schools to hold parent-teacher conferences and other meetings at the work-site.
- Initiate programs that reward and recognize employees who take advantage of opportunities to involve themselves in school activities.
- Encourage their employees to run for school board positions or to participate in community education committees, such as those created by the Prichard Committee.

Businesses can act as catalysts and facilitators for meaningful community dialogue about KERA's implementation and process.

Interwoven throughout KERA is the notion that schools alone cannot meet the many needs of children. Indeed, education and the general well-being of children is a community responsibility. This means that for KERA to succeed, entire communities will need to take education reform seriously and hold themselves accountable for its progress.

Given the tremendous stake of business in quality education and a well skilled work force, it is particularly appropriate that business assume a lead role in mobilizing meaningful community discussion about children's needs and the progress of local reform. For example, businesses might:

- Encourage and assist schools and other community groups to collect and publicly report relevant data about the educational progress of children, thereby assuming some responsibility for the accountability of education outcomes.
- Join with other community groups to sponsor forums that publicly report and discuss progress of local KERA reforms such as school-based decision making, Primary School, and Family Resource and Youth Services Centers.
- Take public positions through speaking engagements, op-ed pieces, radio programs, etc. concerning community issues related to education and the general well-being of children (e.g.: employment policies for high school students, the need for support of specific community services, the importance of school completion, etc.).
- Support local and state legislators who have worked for the passage of KERA. Remind all local and state legislators of the need for their continued support of education reform and its policies.

ALERT TO KENTUCKY EMPLOYERS!

We do not have enough well qualified workers for the jobs of the future.

Kentucky's age structure is changing more dramatically than other states.

Less than 1/3 of our households have children.

Kentucky has the least educated adult work force in the nation. Young families under age 35 have not done as well economically as their parents.

Kentucky has historically had one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation with a low ranking in per capita family income.

The image and reality of a weak education system has slowed Kentucky's economic growth.

Education must become a community responsibility. We must all work to support education.

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